

## GENERAL STATEMENTS FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE

### ***Disease***

1. Influenza (the flu) is a serious disease that can lead to hospitalization and sometimes even death. Anyone can get sick from the flu.
2. While flu can make anyone sick, certain people are at greater risk for serious complications from the flu, causing hospitalization or even death, such as:
  - a. older people,
  - b. young children
  - c. people with chronic lung disease (such as asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart disease, neurologic conditions, and certain other long-term health conditions, and
  - d. pregnant women
3. Flu viruses are constantly changing. Each flu season, different flu viruses can spread, and they can affect people differently based on their body's ability to fight infection. Even healthy children and adults can get very sick from the flu and spread it to family and friends.
  - a. Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Studies going back 30 years to 1976 show that seasonal flu-related deaths have ranged from about 3,000 people to 49,000 people.
    - i. Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.
  - b. In the United States, thousands of healthy adults and children have to visit the doctor or are hospitalized from flu complications each year. Flu vaccination can protect you and your family from the flu and its complications.
  - c. Last flu season (2009-2010) is an example of how unpredictable flu can be. The 2009 H1N1 virus that caused a lot of illness was more serious for younger people than seasonal flu usually is.

### ***Vaccine: universal recommendations, herd immunity, 2009 H1N1 virus inclusion, availability, protection, efficacy***

4. The first and most important step in protecting against the flu is to get a flu vaccine each season.
  - a. CDC recommends a three step approach to fighting flu: vaccination, everyday preventive actions and the correct use of antiviral drugs if your doctor recommends them.
  - b. Everyone 6 months of age and older is recommended to be vaccinated against influenza.

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- c. Getting a flu vaccine is easy, and it is the single best way to protect yourself and your loved ones from flu.
  - d. Get vaccinated as soon as vaccine becomes available in your community.
  - e. The flu vaccine provides protection that lasts through the flu season.
  - f. The flu vaccine is updated each season to protect against the three flu viruses that research indicates will cause the most illness.
  - g. Because flu viruses are always changing, last season's flu vaccine may not protect against newer viruses, and annual vaccination is the only way to maintain protection each season.
  - h. You need to get the 2010-11 seasonal flu vaccine even if you got the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine last season.
5. Protect your family from the flu by getting yourself vaccinated. A flu vaccine reduces your risk of illness, hospitalization, or even death and can prevent you spreading the virus to your loved ones.
6. Health experts now recommend that all people 6 months of age and older get a flu vaccine every flu season.
7. This year's flu vaccine is being made in the same way as past flu vaccines.
- a. It will protect against the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season, as well as other seasonal influenza viruses. CDC expects H1N1 and other seasonal viruses to spread this season.
  - b. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine will protect against:
    - an influenza A H3N2 virus,
    - an influenza B virus, and
    - the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season.
8. Much of the U.S. population is at high risk from serious flu complications either because of their age or because they have a medical condition like asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), heart conditions, or because they are pregnant.
- a. Over 30% of people 50-64 years of age have one or more underlying health conditions that put them at increased risk for serious complications from flu.
  - b. All children younger than 5 years and all adults 65 years and older are also at increased risk of severe illness from influenza.

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9. Flu vaccines are offered in many locations including doctor's offices, clinics, health departments, pharmacies, and college health centers, as well as many employers and even in some schools.
10. Even if you don't have a regular doctor or nurse, you can get a flu vaccine somewhere else, like a health department, pharmacy, urgent care clinic, and maybe your school, college health center, or work.
11. The "2009" in *2009 H1N1 virus* refers to the year the virus was first identified; it does not have to do with how long the vaccine will work or the year in which it should be given.
12. The effectiveness of flu vaccines can vary and depends in part on the match between the viruses in the vaccine and the flu viruses that are circulating in the community as well as the age and health of the person being vaccinated.
13. The influenza vaccine is used to prevent flu illness, not to treat it. It takes two weeks after vaccination for your body to build immunity for protection against the flu.
14. Vaccination can prevent illness and lessen the severity of disease. Getting vaccinated is particularly important for people at high risk of serious flu-related complications and close contacts of people at high-risk.
15. Some people should talk with a doctor before getting an influenza vaccine:
  1. those with severe allergy to chicken eggs, those with an allergic reaction to flu vaccines in past should not receive vaccine, but should talk with their doctor about other ways to prevent getting ill with flu
  2. those who have ever had Guillain-Barré Syndrome (a severe paralytic illness, also called GBS), should talk with their doctor about the risks and benefits of getting flu vaccine.
  3. those who are ill with fever should wait until symptoms pass to get vaccinated.
16. For more information about the seriousness of influenza and the benefits of vaccination, talk to your doctor or nurse, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call CDC at 1-800-CDC-INFO.

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### VACCINE SAFETY

#### Flu Vaccine Safety Statements for General Audience

1. Over the years, hundreds of millions of people in the U.S. have safely received seasonal flu vaccines. Last flu season, about 80 million people in the U.S. also received the vaccine made to protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus, and the vaccine's safety was similar to that of seasonal flu vaccines.
2. Over the last 50 years, flu vaccines have been shown to be safe. Every year, CDC works closely with FDA, health care providers, state and local health departments, and other partners to ensure the highest safety standards for flu vaccines. CDC also works closely with FDA to ensure systems are in place to promptly detect unexpected health problems following vaccination.
3. The flu shot (also called inactivated influenza vaccine) cannot give you the flu. It is comprised of killed viruses. Most people generally do not experience any side effects from the flu shot. When they do occur, they are usually mild. The most common side effects from the flu shot, including the shot made to protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus last season, are soreness, redness, tenderness or swelling where the shot is given.
4. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) hold vaccines to the highest safety standards. The safety of flu vaccines is closely monitored with long-established systems that have demonstrated their usefulness in detecting vaccine safety problems. See <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/safety/>.
  - As with all vaccines, flu vaccine testing and safety monitoring are done in multiple phases.
  - For vaccines to be approved, the manufacturing facilities and process must meet standards to make sure the purity and strength of the vaccine are appropriate. In addition, data from clinical trials help determine safety and the appropriate dosage of the vaccine to provide the best protection.
  - After vaccines are approved, each batch is tested before it is released to check purity and strength. Several systems are in place to watch for possible side effects after vaccines are given.
5. The nasal spray flu vaccine has been offered for more than 7 years and can protect healthy people ages 2 through 49 years from the flu. The nasal spray vaccine cannot give you the flu. It is made from weakened flu viruses that can only infect the nasal passages. Most people don't have any side effects. When side effects do occur they tend to be mild, for example runny nose, cough, or nasal congestion. The nasal spray should not be given to pregnant women or persons with chronic medical conditions including asthma or children 2-4 years old with a history of wheezing.

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6. Thimerosal is a preservative that protects vaccines against contamination with germs. Flu vaccines are available with and without thimerosal. Both options are safe for protecting you and your family from flu. If you have questions, talk to your doctor or nurse.
7. In 1976, a type of influenza (swine flu) vaccine was associated with Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS). Since then, flu vaccines have not been clearly linked to GBS.
  - GBS is a rare disorder in which a person's own immune system damages the nerves, causing muscle weakness and sometimes paralysis.
  - If there is a risk of GBS from current flu vaccines, it would be no more than 1 or 2 cases per million people vaccinated. This is much lower than the risk of severe influenza, which can be prevented by vaccination.
  - Each year, about 3,000 to 6,000 people in the United States develop GBS whether or not they received a vaccination. About 80 to 160 cases of GBS are expected to occur each week regardless of vaccination.
  - While it is not fully known what causes GBS, it is known that about two-thirds of people who get GBS do so several days or weeks after they have been sick with diarrhea or a lung or sinus illness. An infection with the bacteria Campylobacter jejuni, which can cause diarrhea, is one of the most common illnesses linked to GBS.
  - Influenza infection can also lead to GBS.
8. CDC and FDA are aware of reports from Australia of fever and febrile seizures (or seizures with fever) in children younger than 5 years after getting one type of 2010 seasonal flu vaccine made for the Southern hemisphere and manufactured by CSL Biotherapies. There are also some reports of fever in children aged 5 years through 8 years old, but there is no information to assess whether this is higher than expected. Febrile seizures have not been associated with other seasonal flu vaccines in the Southern Hemisphere in 2010.
  - CSL Biotherapies makes a similar flu vaccine for the U.S. called Afluria. This brand of seasonal flu vaccine has not been widely used among children in the US before, but it has been administered to U.S. adults in past flu seasons.
  - The seasonal flu vaccines used in the U.S. have been well studied and there has been no association with febrile seizures following vaccination. During the 2009-2010 flu season, vaccine safety monitoring systems that were set up to look for side effects such as febrile seizures found no evidence of increased risk for febrile seizures after vaccination with either the 2009-2010 seasonal flu vaccine or the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine.
  - CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend that for the 2010-11 influenza season in the United States:

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- Afluria should not be used in children aged 6 months through 8 years.
- Other age-appropriate, licensed seasonal influenza vaccine formulations should be used for prevention of influenza in children aged 6 months through 8 years.
- If no other age-appropriate, licensed seasonal influenza vaccine is available for a child aged 5 years through 8 years old who has a medical condition that increases their risk for influenza complications, Afluria may be given, and providers should discuss the benefits and risks of influenza vaccination with the parents or caregivers before administering Afluria.

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### STATEMENTS FOR PARENTS

1. Flu can be a serious disease for children of all ages and can lead to hospitalization or, rarely, even death.
  - a. Flu can be a serious disease for children of all ages, causing them to miss school, activities, or even be hospitalized.
2. Every year in the United States, even healthy children are hospitalized or die from flu complications.
3. In the U.S. each year an average of 20,000 children younger than 5 years old are hospitalized because of flu complications.
  - a. Influenza is one of the leading causes of infectious disease hospitalizations among young children.
4. Children younger than 5 years old, and especially those younger than 2 years, are at higher risk of serious flu complications, including hospitalization and death, compared to older children. The risk of serious illness is highest among children younger than 6 months of age.
5. Vaccination is the first and most important step in protecting your family against the flu.
  - a. Children 6 months and older are recommended to get a yearly flu vaccine.
  - b. Infants younger than 6 months old are too young to be vaccinated. Protect them by getting yourself, other children and family in the household, and other close contacts vaccinated. This will help prevent spreading the virus to infants.
  - c. Getting vaccinated during pregnancy can protect the mother and may offer your newborn protection from the flu after birth.
6. CDC recommends that children younger than 9 years of age who have never received a seasonal flu vaccine get two doses of vaccine spaced at least 4 weeks apart.
  - a. Two doses given at least 4 weeks apart are recommended for children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who are getting a flu vaccine for the first time. Children who only got 1 dose in their first year of vaccination should get 2 doses the following year.
  - b. All children 6 months up through 8 years of age getting a flu vaccine for the first time need two doses, at least 4 weeks apart, the first year they are vaccinated in order to develop immune protection. This includes children who received one or two doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine, but who have never received a seasonal flu vaccine.
7. Vaccination is especially important for protecting children with asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), or other long-term health conditions because they are at increased risk for serious complications from flu.

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8. The flu can make some health conditions worse. For example, children with asthma (even if it's mild or controlled by medication) are more likely to develop serious complications from the flu, such as asthma attacks or pneumonia compared to children without asthma.
9. Children with asthma (even if the asthma is mild or controlled by medication) are more likely to be hospitalized for flu-related complications than children who don't have asthma.
10. If you live with or care for a child at high risk of serious complications from flu, you and your child should get vaccinated.
11. Children also should be current on other vaccines that can help prevent pneumonia, like pneumococcal and Hib vaccines.
12. Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about getting a flu vaccine.
13. Be sure to let the doctor know if your child has an allergy to eggs or any health conditions like asthma, other heart or lung conditions, neurologic conditions or other medical problems.



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### **STATEMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS (TO PATIENTS)**

1. All people 6 months and older are now recommended to receive annual influenza vaccination. In February, 2010, CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) voted to expand vaccination recommendations to include all people 6 months and older, beginning in the 2010-11 influenza season.

### **STATEMENTS FOR HEALTH CARE WORKERS**

1. Flu can spread rapidly in health care settings. Vaccination is the first and most important step physicians, health care workers, and vulnerable patients can take to protect against the flu.
2. Even if you're healthy, you can get sick and spread the flu. Get vaccinated to help protect yourself from influenza and to keep from spreading it to your family, co-workers, and patients. Studies conducted in health care settings show when a lot of health care workers get vaccinated, vulnerable patients are protected.
3. Health care workers should get a seasonal flu vaccine every year because flu viruses change yearly and a flu vaccine from a previous season may not protect against current flu viruses.
4. Health care workers should routinely offer seasonal influenza vaccination to everyone age 6 months and older as soon as it is available in your community, and throughout the flu season, which can last as late as May.

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### STATEMENTS FOR PHYSICIANS

*(Note: Some of these messages may seem repetitive. These messages and issues they address were especially important to physicians in formative research.)*

1. Influenza is a contagious disease that is caused by a virus, which infects the respiratory tract (nose, throat, and lungs).
2. People can spread influenza before they realize that they are sick. Most healthy adults may be able to infect others beginning 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5-7 days after becoming sick. Children may spread the virus for longer than seven days. That means that you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.
3. Compared with many other viral infections, such as the common cold, influenza is more likely to cause severe illness and life-threatening complications in many people.
4. Each year in the United States on average:
  - a. 5% to 20% of the population gets the flu;
  - b. More than 200,000 people are [hospitalized from flu-related complications](#), and;
  - c. Between 3,000 and 49,000 people [die from flu-related causes](#).
5. Certain long-term health conditions can put patients at higher risk of serious flu-related complications. This includes chronic lung diseases, such as asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), diabetes, heart disease, neurologic conditions and pregnancy. Vaccination is the first and best way to protect against flu.
6. Serious problems from the influenza vaccine are very rare. The most common side effect that a person is likely to experience is soreness where the injection was given. This is generally mild and usually goes away after a day or two.
7. Getting a flu vaccine can keep you from getting sick and spreading the disease.

#### ***Additional Messages for Pediatricians:***

8. Influenza causes more hospitalizations among young children than any other vaccine-preventable disease.
9. Each year an average of 20,000 children younger than age 5 are hospitalized because of influenza complications.

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10. Children with asthma, diabetes, neurologic diseases and other health conditions are at especially high risk of developing serious flu complications.
11. All children 6 months through 8 years of age getting a seasonal flu vaccine for the first time need two doses, at least 4 weeks apart, the first year they are vaccinated in order to develop immune protection. This includes children who received one or two doses of the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine, but who have never received a seasonal flu vaccine.

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### STATEMENTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS 19-24 YEARS OF AGE

1. Every adult, including those between 19 and 24 years of age, is recommended to receive the seasonal flu vaccine.
2. Adults between the ages of 19 and 24 were hit particularly hard by the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last flu season and is expected to continue circulating during the 2010-2011 flu season, along with other influenza viruses.
  - a. Even people that got vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 vaccine need to be vaccinated with the 2010-11 seasonal vaccine since the seasonal vaccine provides protection against other influenza strains in addition to H1N1.
3. The flu vaccine is now recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older. Even healthy adults 19 through 24 years of age should get vaccinated.
4. Getting sick with the flu can result in missed school, work, and extra-curricular activities.
5. Vaccination of adults 19 through 24 years of age with certain long-term health conditions is particularly important because they are at high risk of serious illness if they get the flu. This includes people with asthma (even if mild or controlled) and diabetes, for example. For the full list of health conditions that put someone at high risk, see [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high\\_risk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm).
6. Adults 19 through 24 years of age may spread flu to friends and family who are at high risk of flu complications such as grandparents, younger siblings, or those with health conditions like asthma or diabetes.
7. Adults 19 through 24 years of age should talk to a doctor or nurse about getting a seasonal flu vaccine.
8. For more information about the flu, call 1-800-CDC-INFO, visit [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov), or [m.cdc.gov](http://m.cdc.gov) on your mobile phone or PDA, or sign up for CDC flu texts at (URL).

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### **STATEMENTS FOR PEOPLE AGE 65 OR OLDER**

1. As always, flu viruses will circulate this season. People age 65 and older are at increased risk for complications from flu and should get a yearly flu shot. You need to get the 2010-11 seasonal flu vaccine even if you got the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine last season.
2. This season, people 65 years and older will have two flu vaccines available to them - a regular flu vaccine and a new flu vaccine with a higher dose which will result in a stronger immune response against flu. Talk to your doctor or nurse about the best option for you.
3. The higher dose vaccine may have more of the mild side effects that occur with the standard-strength seasonal vaccines. Mild side effects can include pain, redness or swelling at the injection-site, headache, muscle ache and fever.
  - a. Talk with your doctor about which type of seasonal flu vaccine is right for you.
  - b. Ask your doctor if you should get the higher dose flu vaccine.
4. Vaccination is the best protection for older adults against influenza and influenza-related complications.
5. People 65 years and older have some of the highest rates of hospitalization and death as a result of influenza infection.
6. Pneumonia is a serious complication of influenza infections and causes more death among people age 65 and older than any other group.

## STATEMENTS FOR ADULTS WITH CERTAIN CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITIONS

### *General*

1. People with health conditions like chronic lung diseases including asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), neurologic, and heart disease accounted for the majority of hospitalizations and deaths from the H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last flu season.
2. Diabetes, asthma, and heart disease are among the most common long-term health conditions that place people at high risk for serious flu complications.
3. Adults with health conditions like asthma, diabetes (type 1 and 2), and heart disease, should receive a flu vaccine as soon as it becomes available.
4. Stay in control – Protect yourself by getting your flu vaccine.
5. For the full list of health conditions that put you at high risk, see [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high\\_risk.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm).
6. People with medical conditions like asthma, diabetes, and heart disease should also get the pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) to protect against pneumonia.
  - a. The PPSV can be given at the same time as the seasonal flu vaccine.
  - b. Ask your doctor about getting this shot.

### *Diabetes*

1. People with diabetes (type 1 and 2), even when well managed, are at increased risk of severe disease and complications, like hospitalization, pneumonia and even death, as a result of getting the flu.
  - a. Diabetes can make the immune system more vulnerable to severe flu disease.
  - b. Illness can raise your blood glucose (sugar) level.
  - c. Not eating as a result of being sick can cause blood glucose levels to change.
2. People with diabetes need to have a plan for managing their diabetes when they get sick. They should talk with their doctor, nurse, or clinic about “sick day rules.”
  - a. For additional information about “Sick Day Rules” for people with diabetes, see [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/diabetes/diabetes\\_factsheet.htm#e](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/diabetes/diabetes_factsheet.htm#e).

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3. People with diabetes should get the flu shot, not the nasal spray.

### ***Asthma***

1. Flu is more serious for people with asthma, even when asthma is mild and the symptoms are well managed.
2. People with asthma are more likely to develop serious health condition and be hospitalized as a result of getting the flu. Flu can cause breathing problems and trigger asthma attacks or cause pneumonia and other acute respiratory diseases.
3. Adults and children with asthma are more likely to develop pneumonia after getting sick with the flu.
4. Asthma is the most common medical condition among adults and kids hospitalized with the flu.
5. People with asthma should get the flu shot, not the nasal spray.

## **STATEMENTS FOR OB/GYNS:**

1. Pregnant women who are infected with influenza virus are at increased risk for severe illness and adverse outcomes.
2. To prevent influenza infection, encourage your pregnant patients to get vaccinated. They can be vaccinated during any trimester.
3. Healthy pregnant women as well as pregnant women with other health conditions, such as asthma, have been severely affected by seasonal as well as pandemic 2009 H1N1 flu.
  - a. Pregnant women with influenza are at increased risk of developing serious complications, including hospitalization and death.
  - b. Although pregnant women make up approximately 1% of the U.S. population, they accounted for 5% of the U.S. deaths from 2009 H1N1.
  - c. Changes in the immune, cardiac, and pulmonary systems during pregnancy make a pregnant woman more prone to severe illness from the flu. This risk also extends at least 2 weeks postpartum regardless of pregnancy outcome.
  - d. Because flu vaccines can't be given to infants younger than 6 months, protecting the mother could also protect the baby by preventing an infected mother from spreading flu to her baby following delivery.

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4. Health care providers should offer influenza vaccine to pregnant patients and their close contacts.
  - a. Influenza vaccination should be encouraged for everyone 6 months of age and older, especially those at increased risk for severe influenza illness and their close contacts.
  - b. Groups at increased risk for severe influenza illness include:
    - i. older people,
    - ii. young children, including newborns,
    - iii. pregnant women, and
    - iv. people with chronic lung disease (such as asthma and COPD), diabetes (type 1 or type 2), heart disease, neurological conditions, and certain other long-term health conditions.
5. Recommend flu vaccine for all of your patients, and make plans to vaccinate your patients and staff as soon as the flu vaccine is available.
  - a. Pregnant women should get the flu shot (trivalent, inactivated influenza vaccine).
  - b. The FluMist® (live, intranasal influenza vaccine) is not recommended for pregnant women, but can be given to health care workers who are healthy and not pregnant.
  - c. Although there are no contraindications for pregnant women to the multi-dose vaccine, a thimerosal-free seasonal flu vaccine is available upon request.
6. Flu shots are safe for pregnant women and their unborn babies. The shot has been recommended by ACOG and CDC for pregnant women for many years.



## **STATEMENTS FOR PREGNANT WOMEN:**

1. Flu vaccination helps to protect pregnant women and their unborn babies from getting the flu. Flu vaccination may even help protect your baby from the flu after your baby is born.
  - a. Flu vaccine is a safe way to protect you and your unborn baby from serious illness and complications of flu.
  - b. When pregnant women get a flu shot, both mothers and their babies get the flu less often.
2. Flu shots are safe for pregnant women and their unborn babies. The shot has been recommended for pregnant women for many years.
3. The flu vaccine can be given at any time while you are pregnant.
4. The flu shot is safe for women who plan to breastfeed and the vaccine can be given to mothers who are breastfeeding.
5. Talk to your doctor about flu vaccination during pregnancy.